THE LION TAMER

BY A. P. SHEPARD

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"CEASE, MY FRIENDS, I PRAY YOU!" (p. 37).

MISSIONARY STORIES

THE LION-TAMER

BY THE REV.

A. P. SHEPARD

"Per ardua ad astra"

LONDON:
CENTRAL BOARD OF MISSIONS
AND
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1919

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The Revolt.

IN a clear space in the midst of some grass-thatched huts a group of men were talking earnestly together. They were Hottentots, short men with light brown skin and curly black hair. For the most part their faces expressed a sullen fear, but now and then one of them would break out in excited anger.

Foremost among them was one man to whom they seemed to listen as their leader. His face was stern and commanding, but not savage, while the rippling muscles of his body showed that he was possessed of unusual strength. This was Africaner, the chief of the Hottentot tribe. Twenty years before he and his father had held sway over all these hills and vales of the Witsemberg veldt, pasturing their own flocks, hunting their own game, and drinking of their own streams. Then had come the Boer farmers, trekking north. Against them, armed with guns, the Hottentots had had no

chance, and in every case they either fled or became the slaves of their Boer masters.

The second fate had befallen Africaner and his people, and they groaned under the burden of their bondage. Faithfully though they served their master, guarding his flocks well against the pirate Bushmen, all they received in return was unspeakable brutality. The men were sjamboked on the slightest pretext, the women and children treated with every form of cruelty, and they received as wages a miserable pittance that barely sufficed for them to drag out their lives in abject misery. Their naturally timid natures ill fitted them to resist the overbearing tyranny of their Boer master, but at last matters had come to a head.

They had received information that they were to be sent to a neighbouring farm in order that some of their number might be seized, and when the order was given them, they refused to obey it. Again and again the order was sent, but each time it was met with the same sullen, determined refusal. The farmer was amazed and furious. Never before had they dared to disobey him, and he determined to give them a lesson they would never forget. He ordered them to appear before his house that evening to explain their disobedience.

The Hottentots knew that now the storm must burst upon them, and some of them trembled as

they pictured their master's wrath. It needed all Africaner's persuasion and authority to get them to face it.

So far no violence had been planned. They intended only to ask for some redress for their grievances. Titus, however, the chief's brother, a man smaller than Africaner but of extraordinary endurance and still greater ferocity, took his gun with him, unperceived by the others. For by now the Hottentots had been trained in the use of fire-arms in the defence of the cattle.

It was with much fear and trembling that the men were gathered in front of the farmhouse, waiting for their master. Suddenly the door was flung open and he appeared at the top of the steps, his face flushed with rage and a heavy sjambok in his hand. As Africaner went up the steps to meet him, the Boer rushed furiously at him and, with one blow of his great fist, knocked him down headlong. Instantly Titus drew his gun from where it was concealed behind his back, and fired. With a groan the farmer staggered back and fell. As he did so, the Hottentots passed over his body into the house. Their mistress threw herself at their feet, imploring mercy for herself and her children, but they assured her that they had nothing against her, and only demanded all the guns and ammunition in the house, and then decamped.

Not a moment was to be lost. For the natives who had murdered their master there could be no mercy, and that very night the whole tribe must fly, before the news of what had happened could get abroad.

On and on, week after week, they fled over the veldt, avoiding the farmsteads, and keeping as much as possible in the shelter of the bush, on to the deserts of the north, where they would be free from pursuit.

At last they reached the banks of the Orange River, and there Africaner halted. He was free from pursuit, but now his people had to establish themselves among the hostile Namaquas. But their new-won freedom had brought back their old-time vigour, and this, together with their better arms, soon won them a strip of territory on the north bank of the river.

By this time the news of the murder had spread, and commandoes were organised for the capture of the murderers. But all to no purpose. There was no hope of finding them in the trackless desert.

At last the Governor at Cape Town proclaimed Africaner an outlaw and fixed a price of a thousand dollars on his head. Immediately his enemies were multiplied. Not only the farmers, but Griquas, Namaquas, Bushmen were now his foes.

All who had not sought his life for hatred, now sought it for gain.

Finding himself at bay, all the fierceness of Africaner's nature hardened itself against them. This way and that he drove his plundering raids, now against the farmers to the south, now against the tribes to the north of the river. Far and wide the terror of his name spread, till he became the lion of the desert, at whose roar all men fled in terror.

The Lion of the Desert.

It had been a great raid! Africaner and his men had found kraal after kraal empty of warriors. At the rumour of the approach of the terrible outlaw the whole tribe, men, women, and children, had fled into the desert, leaving their cattle behind, an easy prey. Now the raiders were at their last halt before reaching home, and most of them had gone on, leaving only a small band to bring in the booty. Within a roughly built stockade a great herd of cattle swayed and tossed, while the men kept easy watch, secure from attack now they were so near home. For who would venture so near the lion's lair?

Suddenly there was a great shout, and a band of warriors, who had crept up unperceived, swarmed into the stockade. They were Griquas, led by their chief Berend, the sworn enemy of Africaner. In a

moment all was confusion, the banging of guns, the clash of spears, the shouts of men, and, above all, the bellowing of the terrified beasts. Of the result there could be little doubt. Africaner and his men were hopelessly outnumbered, and soon it became a question of escaping with their lives. Breaking from the stockade they fled across the plain towards a little hill, whose scattered boulders would afford them a better opportunity for defence. But their pursuers did not follow them far. Their whole skill was required to prevent a wild stampede of the cattle.

With a burning heart the outlaw stood on the hillside and watched his enemy round up the great herd, driving it off with much brandishing of spears and jeering shouts. Soon they were only a little cloud of dust on the horizon, and all that was left was the broken stockade and a few brown bodies, on which already the vultures were dropping.

The lion of the desert raged, but he was not beaten. Sending off messengers for reinforcements, he made his warriors rest for two days. Weeks of long marches and fighting had wearied them, and they had need to be fresh for the task before them. Fortunately a few calves had broken out of the stockade and eluded the enemy. Soon one of them was caught and killed, and it was with

strengthened bodies and fierce hearts that the warriors started at length in pursuit of their enemy.

The track lay east, along the south bank of the Orange River, and each day it became clearer that the warriors were overtaking the slowly moving herd. At length a freshly deserted camp proved that the enemy were only a few hours ahead, and late in the day a faint cloud of dust was visible on the horizon.

That night the stillness of the desert was broken by the sound of shouting and revelry. It was with good reason that Berend and his men made merry. Had they not at last inflicted a great defeat on their enemy? The thousand dollars set on his head were not theirs yet, but to have attacked him within a few miles of his own kraal, and to have carried off all his cattle, was a magnificent achievement. By this time they had certainly eluded pursuit. Sentries were posted as usual, but even the sentries joined in the general revelry. With wild dances and feasting they caroused far into the night. At length, however, they fell asleep, even the sentries drowsed, and the only sound which broke the stillness was the uneasy lowing of the cattle.

While they slept, along the northern bank of the river a band of armed men stole silently in single file. Had the sentries been alert they would hardly

have seen them, for their brown bodies slipped like shadows through the brushwood, and they moved, like all savages, without a sound. Leading them was Africaner, his body tense, and his face set in grim anticipation of his revenge.

Now and then there was the crash of a startled deer, or the noisy splash of a wading hippopotamus. Except for that and the restless lowing from the camp, the silence was unbroken.

Past the sleeping camp the warriors stole till they were out of hearing. Then, at a sign from their leader, they all halted. Quickly fastening their guns and ammunition on their heads, they slipped into the river, heedless of the hippopotami, whose black backs loomed up here and there in the water, and whose terrible jaws could literally sever their bodies in two. Soon a string of brown heads stretched across the stream, their owners moving as silently through the water as they did on land. On reaching the farther bank they began to retrace their steps, moving more stealthily than ever, the nearer they approached their prey. At length they reached the very edge of the unsuspecting camp, finding, as they had expected, that the east side had been left quite unguarded.

Suddenly a shout rang out and, almost immediately, a volley of stones rattled on the huts of the sleepers. Dazed and frightened they rushed out,

and instinctively made for the west side, where an attack might be expected. Instantly a shower of arrows and the deadly crack of guns told them that they were taken in the rear. Here and there men fell, and then panic seized the remainder. Dazed by their debauch and believing themselves to be hopelessly out-numbered, they turned and fled into the night. In the darkness pursuit was hopeless, but Africaner's revenge was complete. To his own cattle were now added those of his enemy.

Yet his rage burned fiercely as he thought how nearly he had been beaten. Every man's hand was against him. Not only the white invaders, but even the men of his own race sought his life for the sake of the price on his head. So be it, he thought; let him be the foe of all men, yet would he make them ten times more afraid than ever their enmity could make him. As he made his way back to his kraal, many a tribe trembled lest the lion of the desert, returning with the spoils, should fall upon them by the way.

The Adventurer.

An ox-waggon was moving slowly across the veldt. It was a heavy, springless affair, and it was well so, for its course lay along the merest track through the broken country that could scarcely be

dignified by the name of a road. A Kafir walked on either side of the team of oxen, to keep them on the right path, or to help them when they floundered through soft sand or, now and then, forded a river. Another native sat on the front of the waggon, wielding the long ox-whip and shouting from time to time at the beasts.

Within the waggon a white man sat, a man with so boyish a face that he hardly seemed out of his teens. But his clear eye and the firm set of his mouth gave character to his youthful appearance. He was sitting with his elbows on his knees and his head on his hands, and his eyes were gazing out into the sunshine far before him, as though fixed on a distant goal. For two hundred miles from the Cape he had journeyed, sometimes jolting along in the waggon, but more often walking behind with the spare oxen and tiny flock of sheep that made up the little caravan. The pace was painfully slow, the oxen never covering more than twenty miles a day. Nor was it to be wondered at, for their course lay over mountains, through rocky ravines, across sandy deserts, while often rivers had to be forded, in which the water rose to the shoulders of the oxen, who scarcely could keep their feet on the slippery bed of the stream. Dangers and delays there were in plenty. Sometimes one or more of the oxen would break loose at night and had to be tracked

the next day; and once they had wasted two days in a fruitless search for a sheep which a hyæna had frightened off and chased to the mountains. But never did the look of buoyant hope leave Robert Moffat's face, not once did he give way to despair.

Sometimes he found shelter for the night at one of the scattered Boer farmsteads past which his road lay. But more often he camped on the open veldt. The oxen would be outspanned, a fire lit in the shelter of some trees or bushes, and soon he and his boys would be seated round it enjoying their supper. Sometimes he slept under the waggon-tilt; but more often he would lie beneath the open sky, looking up at the blazing tropical stars and listening to the doleful howls of prowling hyænas.

But this night he knew he would not lie under the sky, for he was approaching a farmstead where he would get a good welcome. The setting sun was throwing long shadows of the waggon across the veldt before the house came into view. It was set up on a little hill, well sheltered by surrounding trees, and Moffat bade his men drive the waggon into the valley, while he walked up to meet the farmer. The latter, who had seen the travellers approaching, came forward to meet him.

"Good-day, friend," he said, "and welcome! My boys will see to your cattle."

Having thanked him and introduced himself, Moffat followed the hospitable farmer into the house, where he was introduced to his wife and was soon seated with them at the supper-table.

When they had eaten, his hosts asked him of his journey.

"I am a missionary," he replied, "and I am travelling from the Cape to Namaqualand."

"Namaqualand!" said the farmer. "That is a long journey, and a wild country. You must beware of Africaner, the outlaw."

"It is to Africaner that I am going," rejoined Moffat quietly.

"To Africaner!" exclaimed the farmer and his wife together, starting to their feet. "No," went on the latter, "surely not. You are too young to wish to die."

"But Africaner has already received missionaries."

"Yes, and driven them out," the farmer rejoined. "Have you not heard of the burning of Warm Bath station?"

"Yes, I have heard about it."

"And still you think of going! Why, he will set you up for a mark for his boys to shoot at."

"But there is a missionary even now visiting his kraal."

"I tell you I believe it not. He is a son of per-

dition, and nothing will ever change his black heart. Go to him, and he will strip off your skin and make of it a drum to dance to. And when he has danced, your skull will be his drinking-cup."

"Well, friends, we shall see," Moffat replied quietly. But though his hosts could see that it would be useless to try to dissuade him, they shook their heads gloomily over his foolhardiness.

Presently the farmer asked the young missionary if he would take the family evening prayer, and when they were all seated, the latter inquired if the Hottentot servants were coming.

"To prayers! The Hottentots!" the old man exclaimed in amazement and indignation. "What have prayers to do with their black hearts? But stay, there are the dogs. I will bring them in. It will do *them* more good."

Moffat made no reply to his anger, but quietly began to read. He was reading from the fifteenth chapter of St. Matthew, and soon the cloud cleared from the old man's face as he listened to the familiar words read in that gentle, steady voice. Presently the words came, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." He paused a moment and the old man jumped to his feet.

"Stay, lad," he exclaimed, "you shall have your Hottentots." The servants trooped in and stood

against the wall; but the unaccustomed words and prayers meant little to them, for their minds were full of wonder as to what this new move of their master might mean.

When they had risen and were alone again the farmer spoke. "You took a heavy hammer, Mynheer, but you cracked a hard head." But he looked at the young man as though the blow he had dealt had won him favour.

Perils by the Way.

The African sun blazed fiercely down from a cloudless sky on a seemingly endless waste of sand, from which, here and there, rose a parched and rocky hill. As far as the eye could see there was no blade of green except an occasional stunted bush and a few tufts of withered grass. Even the ox-waggon in the sands seemed deserted. Its pole lay idle on the ground, and there was no sign of oxen or men.

Presently a man came from beneath the waggon-tilt, and, shielding his eyes from the glare, looked out to the north. As he gazed into the distance his face wore an anxious look. Of all the perils in which Moffat had found himself, this was the worst. Four days before a great disaster had befallen the little caravan. The heat had been

intense and for two days there had been hardly any water for men or cattle. All that day the oxen had been frantic, running here and there to find some rest for their hoofs from the burning sand. At last they had found a hard piece of ground, with little or no sand on it, and there they had huddled, cooling their hoofs in the shade of their bodies, each beast pushing and thrusting to get into the middle of the bunch. At sunset, when the men, who had been resting in the shade of the waggon, came to inspan the oxen, they found that the greater part of them had rushed madly off in the direction of their last stopping-place. A messenger was immediately sent after them, but at midnight he returned empty-handed. His terrible thirst and his fear of the lions, whom he had heard roaring in the mountains, had driven him back.

Unless all were to perish, not a moment was to be lost. Immediately Moffat sent on his men with the remainder of the oxen, to make for the next watering-place and bring back help, while he and the native driver waited with the waggon. Twice a day they had gone up to a rocky hill near by to get water. It had to be scooped from a deep hole in the sand, and tasted like bilge-water, but they drank it greedily.

Now their food was running short, and in the terrible heat they were rapidly becoming exhausted.

The wind blew fitfully in Moffat's face like hot puffs from an oven.

Something must have happened to his men, he thought; either they had lost their way or had perished in the desert. Was this to be the end of it all? All the four months that he had tediously journeyed from Cape Town he had everywhere met with evil forebodings from the Boer farmers. And he had heard them unafraid. But was it going to end now in this way? The only living thing in sight was a vulture poised, a black spot against the blue. It was waiting, ready to drop like a stone upon the waggon, when the desert had done its work.

Once more Moffat gazed out northwards. Suddenly he started. Three specks were visible in the distance, rapidly increasing in size until they showed themselves to be men on horseback. Help had come. The God whom he trusted to keep him from the ferocity of Africaner was leading him in safety through the perils of the way. That evening he sat down to a supper of mutton-chops with a thankful heart and a tremendous appetite.

In the Lion's Den.

Moffat lay back and looked at the scene before him with a smile of content. After the bare, scorch-

ing desert, through which he had been travelling for weeks, this was like Paradise. Before him were the waters of the Orange River. Wherever it flowed it turned the desert into a garden. Sometimes it passed through great chasms and under precipitous cliffs, but here it spread out with many windings and its banks were green with grass and bushes, and shaded by beautiful, towering mimosas and willows. Here, too, unlike the desert, there was life in abundance. Wild geese, ducks, snipe, flamingoes fed and swam in the water, or settled in clouds on the shimmering green islands.

But his contented look was not only for the beauty of the scene before him. His journey was almost at an end. In four months he had travelled over four hundred miles of veldt and desert, and now, only a little distance beyond the river before him, lay Africaner's kraal, the goal of all his endeavour.

For three days he had been resting, while a party of friendly Namaquas, who had come from Warm Bath to help him, conveyed his belongings across the river. The waggon and its contents had to be taken over piecemeal on rafts, while the oxen were tied behind and swam across. The task was almost finished and, even as he watched, one of the rafts darted from the bank near him. Like all the others it started well up-stream, for it was swept

along by the current and finished its course far down on the other side. It was a fragile affair of six-foot willow logs, each a few inches in diameter, and it seemed almost impossible that it would carry its cargo safely to the other side. A couple of natives crossed with it, using long poles to keep it clear of the rocks and snags, on which it seemed it must inevitably strike. Moffat watched it on its uncertain course, as he had watched it many times already—so often that he had learned to trust the ability of its crew rather than his own fears. This way and that it darted, now spinning in an eddy, now swinging perilously past some dangerous-looking snag, or, where there was smooth water, poled steadily across by the strong arms of the crew. At length, like all its predecessors, it reached the farther side in safety, and the goods and chattels were taken off and carried well up the bank, out of reach of a sudden flood. Then the natives untied the mimosa thongs which bound the whole together, and in a few moments the craft was on its way back, each man swimming with a log. Moffat had many times watched the same course of events, yet it never failed to interest him, for, with each load that crossed, he felt that his life was becoming more firmly rooted in that strange desert land that lay beyond the river.

Presently a man came to tell him that the next

journey would be the last, and that they intended to take him across with what remained. But rather than trust himself, clothed, to that frail craft, Moffat preferred to swim. Quickly stripping off his clothes, he placed them in a heap with the remaining things, and then slipping down the wooded bank, he plunged into the water. The natives did not see what had happened until he was nearly in midstream, where the current was unsafe for any but the strongest swimmer. When they saw him they shouted out to him to beware, and some of the best swimmers plunged in and tried to overtake him. But to no purpose. Moffat reached the bank well in front of them. As he shook the water from his eyes, a Namaqua came running breathless towards him.

"Mynheer," he gasped, "were you then born in the great sea water?"

Moffat laughed. In his youth and strength he felt fit for the great adventure that he had undertaken.

The next day, the waggon having been put together and loaded for a start, Moffat found himself faced by a new difficulty. The Namaquas besought him with all their power not to go on to Africaner, but to return with them to Warm Bath. In vain Moffat pleaded the promise that had been given to Africaner. The natives beset his waggon,

reasoning, begging, beseeching. He could not help being amused at the cunning with which they had brought him across the river at a spot quite near to one of their villages, intending, no doubt, to use force, should all their arguments fail. But though he was firm in his refusals, he could not but be moved at the passionate longing of these poor, ignorant folk for a teacher.

At last all the women came and, lying down in front of his bullocks, declared that if he went, it must be over their bodies.

Suddenly the difficulty was at an end. In the distance a band of men was seen approaching, and, as they drew near, they were found to be Africaner's people, led by two of the chief's brothers. The fear of Africaner was too much for the Namaquas, and they suffered Moffat to bid them a grateful farewell, though they followed him with loud cries and protestations, as the waggon drove off with its Hottentot escort.

One afternoon, after three or four days' journey, Moffat was told by his companions that they were approaching their destination. At length, as they breasted a slight rise, he saw before him a wide sandy plain, in the middle of which was a large kraal. His heart beat fast. He had arrived at the lion's den, from which, according to his friends, he would never return alive.

The African kraal is circular, and consists of a number of grass-thatched huts, around which there is a high, strongly built stockade, which will resist the attacks of wild beasts or of enemies. The outlaw had provided a further protection against the latter by building his kraal in the middle of a level plain, which made an unexpected attack almost impossible.

Soon they were passing through one of the gates that stood at either end of the kraal and, as Moffat dismounted, he found himself scrutinised by all the eyes of the tribe, men, women, and children. At the next moment, to his relief and joy he was being given a warm welcome by his fellow-missionary, Mr. Ebner, whom he had already met at the Cape and who had now been some weeks at the kraal. His momentary pleasure, however, was somewhat dashed as he noted the cold looks with which his hitherto friendly escort greeted his companion, and he soon perceived that the same coldness and even dislike was shown towards him by all the people. To add to his uneasiness, he saw that the natives were tying his waggon to a large tree, as far as possible from the hut from which Mr. Ebner had come, and which he rightly took to be his.

So far Africaner had not made his appearance, and for an hour or more Moffat waited, his first

vague sense of uneasiness growing into a certainty. At last he saw a muscular looking man approach and halt before him. In a moment he knew that it was the dreaded outlaw chief. Though he had kept him waiting so long, Africaner greeted him kindly.

"Are you the missionary sent to me by the chiefs in London?" he asked.

"I am," Moffat replied.

The chief seemed pleased. "You are young," he said; "I hope you will live long with me and my people."

He turned and gave an order, and immediately a number of women ran up, carrying bundles of mats and long sticks. Africaner pointed to a spot near to where the waggon was tied.

"You must build a hut there for the missionary," he commanded. The women seemed delighted with their task. The poles were soon planted in a circle and their ends bent over and tied in the centre, and upon this framework the grass mats were tied. In half an hour the hut that was to be Moffat's home was finished.

But though the chief had greeted him kindly, he noticed that he treated Mr. Ebner with the same cold indifference as the rest, and when presently he found himself alone in his hut, his sense of discomfort returned tenfold. His thoughts flew to his

home and friends far across the sea, to the mighty ocean and wide deserts he had crossed, and to the high hopes in which he had made his journey. Now he had arrived to find, what he had never expected, that there was open hostility between the missionary and the people. For he could clearly see that Mr. Ebner disliked the Hottentots no less than they did him. In such an atmosphere, not only was work impossible, but their lives were in danger.

The next few days Moffat spent in wandering about the kraal, and though the chief seemed to avoid him, the people themselves were quite friendly, except when he was with his companion. But the atmosphere was electric. One morning the storm burst. Moffat was seated in his hut when he heard a tremendous uproar. Rushing out, he found a large crowd round Mr. Ebner's house. Titus Africaner, the chief's brother, and a man of far greater ferocity than the chief, had been away on a hunting expedition ever since Moffat's arrival. He had returned that morning and was now, with a few friends, storming at Mr. Ebner in the most abusive and threatening language. The latter stood facing him at the door of his hut and interrupted him from time to time with an argument or an angry retort. Moffat could see at a glance that any moment abuse might pass to violence, and

immediately he ran to Africaner's hut. But his story was met with a cold shrug of the shoulders and a reluctant promise to protect Mr. Ebner from actual violence. Disappointed here, Moffat returned to the crowd and, elbowing his way through, he tried to persuade, first the missionary to make no reply to the angry chief, and then the latter to cease his raging. But it was all in vain. The little Hottentot turned on him contemptuously. "I hope *you* will not interfere," he said. Seeing argument was useless, Moffat sat down at the door of the hut. If there was to be violence he would bear his part, for the sake of the white woman and children within.

Until late afternoon the storm raged, but at length Moffat's repeated arguments prevailed, and Titus and his friends departed. But the position was now impossible, and two days later he stood watching the bullock-waggon slowly pass out of sight in which Mr. Ebner and his family were leaving the kraal for ever.

When they were quite out of sight, he returned to his hut with a feeling almost of despair. He was absolutely alone. In a barren and desolate country, that could barely support life, and with a mere pittance that would not suffice to procure his needs from the Cape, he was hundreds of miles from his friends, or even from men of his own race.

More than this, he was in the midst of a people whose past made them very suspicious of implied rebuke and extremely jealous of the rights they had acquired by the force of their arms. Even their first half-friendliness had disappeared since he had taken his fellow-missionary's part. Were the Boer farmers right? Had these outlaws too black hearts ever to soften? Even as the thought crossed his mind he felt that these people were in reality kind and simple-hearted, and that in Africaner himself there was something noble and generous that appealed deeply to him. But they had placed themselves hopelessly beyond the pale. Was he likely to succeed where the missionaries of Warm Bath and Mr. Ebner had failed? Had he been presumptuous in his youth and inexperience?

But then he thought of God — God in Whose service he had made the venture. He let his mind travel back over every step of the way that had brought him there. No, there could be no doubt that God had led him there. And, as surely, God would stand by him now! He would go on and see the venture through.

The Taming of the Lion.

The school was in full swing. Moffat sat at the door of his hut, and before him, squatted on their

haunches, were about a hundred and twenty children of all ages, the little ones stark naked and the older ones dressed in a kaross, or garment of sheepskin.

It was only the second day of school and Moffat was still teaching them their alphabet, while his pupils listened attentively to this new game. No one had ever taken such interest in them before.

Suddenly the teacher paused in his lesson. Unperceived by the children Africaner had strolled up, and stood watching their eager faces. In a moment the lesson was resumed, and soon the chief's eyes were turned from the children to their teacher. Presently he quietly took a seat behind the scholars, and, until school was at an end, his eyes never left Moffat's face. Next morning he was early in his place, and after the lesson he waited to speak to the missionary. All the old hostility and even his reserve seemed to have melted away in his desire to learn.

"Can I have a reading-book?" he asked.

"Certainly," Moffat replied, and not only did he give the book, but he showed the chief how to use it.

Day by day Africaner was in school, and so great was his intelligence and his passion for learning, that before long he was able to read his Testament alone. Often Moffat would see him, seated under the shadow of a rock, or in a corner of his hut,

poring over his book and seemingly undisturbed by the busy traffic moving to and fro before him. Sometimes he would seat himself beside the missionary and get him to explain something that puzzled him.

Each day, as they talked, a deep friendship grew up between them. Moffat was drawn to the chief by the affection and generosity of his nature, while Africaner had found, for the first time in his life, a friend who believed in him. Not only in school and at study were they together, but at the daily services, which Moffat held morning and evening; whoever else might be absent, Africaner was always there.

* * * * *

Never had there been such a washing in the kraal before! Round the fountain all the schoolchildren were gathered. Everywhere there was water, in buckets and pans of all descriptions, and above the ceaseless splashing there constantly rang the merry sound of childish laughter. To and fro among them moved two men, now inspecting one child, now giving an extra rub to another. One of the men was Moffat, the other—Africaner himself! The great chief himself busy washing the children of his people, the chief who had always held that any work but fighting was fit only for women! When the children were clean, there followed the

much more difficult task of washing their filthy karosses. At last the two men stood up, wet but triumphant, and surveyed their work. They felt more than satisfied by their labour, as they saw the pride of the parents and the children themselves in their new appearance.

But deeper than this, as he stood by his friend and saw the smiling faces round them, the young missionary thanked God for the courage He had given him that dark day in his hut. Above all, he thanked Him that He had shown him the way to the hearts of these people and their outlaw chief—the way of love.

That night, when all the tribe were sleeping, he came out from his hut into the cool of the night, and seating himself on a great stone at his door, he gazed up at the brilliant stars and the blazing tropical moon, that seemed to hang low, like a great lamp. As he looked at the Southern Cross, his thoughts flashed away to that other constellation of the north countries, the Great Bear that he had often watched wheel, in the nights of his boyhood in far-off Scotland. Once more his thoughts travelled over the long ways through which he had been led, but this time it was not in despair, but in gratitude and wonder at the work to which God had called him under these southern skies.

Suddenly, as he thought, a shadow fell across

him, and Africaner sat on the stone by his side. For a few moments neither spoke. Then the chief said :

"Do you too think of the stars and moon and skies, Mynheer ?"

"Yes, my friend, often. And you ?"

"I have always thought, but I could not understand, they are too big. But now I think of them more. Tell me of them. Where are they ? And of what are they made ?"

Far into the night they talked, and as Moffat revealed to the chief the wonders of Nature, the African's eyes glowed with a deep intelligence. At last he put his head between his hands.

"I have heard enough," he said. "I feel as if my head is too small for so great things."

But from this time it became the rule for the friends to sit together under the sky, and talk while all the kraal slept. Sometimes they would talk of the wonders of earth or sky or sea, but more often it was of the Book which was the chief's daily study. In the stillness of the night he would say over by heart long passages, which he had been unable to understand, and would listen while Moffat explained to him the wonder of the love of God. It was in those quiet talks, when he learnt that that love of God was the great impulse in the heart of his friend, that he began himself to know its meaning and feel its grip upon his own heart.

Even Titus, the avowed missionary-hater, had fallen under the spell of Moffat's charm. Now he had appointed himself his special champion and protector. One night, while Moffat and the chief were talking, another shadow fell across the rock, and Titus seated himself on the other side of the white man. Many another night he came, but, while the others talked, he always remained silent. One night Moffat appealed to him, and he replied:

"I hear what you say, and I think I sometimes understand, but my heart will not feel."

Moffat knew that in reality the fierce warrior came to show his love for his friend. Yet he also knew that the same Love that had conquered Africaner was working in his brother's heart.

The Jackals and the Lion.

There was war amongst the Namaquas. On a barren plain the warriors of the warring tribes had met for battle. They had just emerged from their roughly-built stockades and were drawing themselves up in opposing battle array, when a band of warriors was seen approaching on horseback. As they drew near the Namaquas saw that it was the dreaded chief Africaner and the pick of his warriors.

What did his coming mean? Both sides

trembled with fear. Though they far outnumbered his men they looked this way and that, and were ready to fly, for they feared him as the jackals, fighting over their prey, fear the terrible lion of the desert and scatter at his approach.

But, before anything could be done, the horsemen had drawn up and Africaner, leaping down, had walked between the opposing ranks. The Namaquas lowered their spears and awaited his orders. Suddenly the great chief stretched out a hand to either side and spoke:

"Cease, my friends, I pray you; lay aside your spears and bows, and fight not one with the other."

The Namaquas looked at each other in amazement. Was this Africaner, the great chief, at the rumour of whose coming they had often fled to the mountains with their wives and children, leaving their cattle and goods behind them?

Could it be Africaner, the pitiless plunderer, who was now advocating peace? Could it be Africaner, at whose word they had trembled, who was now asking, even beseeching, them to listen to him?

But again Africaner was speaking.

"Look at me," he said. "What have I now of all the battles I have fought, and all the cattle I took, but shame and remorse? Hearken to me, or rather, hearken to the teacher whom God has sent to our unhappy country, and let us live at peace."

As they looked where he pointed, they saw for the first time that the missionary Moffat was among the chief's warriors.

The Namaquas were amazed, but the extraordinary situation and the authority of Africaner were too much for them. At his call, the opposing chiefs came forward, and soon the warriors who had been ready to slay one another were mingling in friendship. The war was at an end.

That night, as they were sitting together as usual outside the missionary's hut, Moffat gazed so long and earnestly at his friend's face that at last the later questioned him.

"Why do you gaze so strangely at me, my friend?"

Moffat did not reply for a moment; then he said:

"I was trying to picture to myself your carrying fire and sword through the country, and I could not think how eyes like yours could smile at human woe."

A dull flush mounted in the chief's face and then he buried it in his hands, till at length, between his fingers, Moffat saw the tears fall. He stretched out his hand and touched his shoulder.

"Nay, friend," he said, "I did not mean to rebuke you."

"It is not for your words that I weep," Africaner replied, "but for my own heart. Here am I that

would now be the friend of all men; yet I am a murderer and an outlaw, the enemy of every honest man."

Moffat was silent a while. At last he spoke.

"I have often thought of it, but I have not liked to suggest it. My friend, will you come with me to Cape Town and see the Governor?"

Africaner looked at him in amazement.

"But surely you are my friend?" he asked.

"Of course I am."

"But you know there is a price on my head. If I went to the Governor, I should be hanged at once. Besides, there is not a Boer farmer that would not shoot me at sight."

"Still, it is possible. As for the Boers, you could travel in disguise. For the Governor, I pledge you my honour that when he sees you he will grant you a free pardon. It is worth taking some risks to get peace of mind and to be a free man."

"That is true," replied Africaner, with a strange look in his eyes. "I will think it over, my friend, and let you know. Now good-night," and with bent head the chief strode over to his hut.

Next morning he sought out Moffat.

"I will go with you, my friend," he said, "whenever you wish."

The Lion Tamed.

The hospitable Dutch farmer walked slowly down the hill, on which his farm stood, to meet the stranger who was coming towards him. Doubtless he was calling for water; his waggon and servants stood waiting in the little valley. Visitors were few and far between in this lonely part of the world, and as the old man went along, his thoughts flew, as they had often done lately, to the stranger who had spent a night with him some months before, and who had taught his hard old heart a lesson he had never forgotten. Though he had only been with them a night, he had almost loved that boy, and now—he would never come back.

His visitor's voice interrupted his reverie.

"Good-day, Mynheer, it is good to see you again."

The old man started wildly and thrust his hand behind him.

"Who are you?" he gasped.

"I? Why, Robert Moffat. Surely you have not forgotten me?"

"Moffat! Alas, no." The old man's voice faltered. Then he looked hard at the stranger, and his words fell to a whisper. "It is his *ghost*."

"Ghost! I am no ghost," and the young man stepped forward laughing. As he did so, the farmer fell back a few steps.

"Don't come near me," he exclaimed. "You must be his ghost. Moffat has long since been murdered by Africaner."

"But I tell you I am *no* ghost," and Moffat rubbed his hands together as if to prove that they were flesh and blood. But the old man put his hands before him, as though he would ward him off.

"No, no, it cannot be. Everybody says you were murdered. Why, a man told me he had himself seen your bones."

For a few moments they stood facing each other in silence, to the complete astonishment, not only of the farmer's wife and children, who stood watching at the door, but also of Moffat's servants. At last the Boer could no longer doubt the evidence of his eyes, and he held out a trembling hand to his visitor.

"When, then, did you rise from the dead?" he asked.

Moffat smiled. "Come, my friend," he said, "let me tell you all that has happened to me." And he made as though they would go to the farm.

"No," exclaimed the farmer, "my wife would be terrified to see you. Let us go to your waggon."

As they went he kept looking incredulously at his companion. "How, then, did you escape from Africaner?" he asked.

"There was no need to escape. Africaner is a Christian now, in heart as well as in name."

"I will believe almost anything *you* say, but that I will never believe."

"Nevertheless it is true."

"Men say there are seven wonders in the world, but this would be the eighth."

"Yet Paul, the persecutor, became a Christian."

"No, it is different. This man's heart is too black. What! The man who has murdered many a man, slain women and children in their beds, or burnt their homes over their heads! Such a man a Christian! It is impossible!"

"Nevertheless it is true," the young man repeated quietly.

"Well, if it be true," the farmer declared solemnly, "if Africaner be indeed a Christian, I have only one wish, and that is to see him before I die. When you return, as sure as the sun is over our heads, I will go with you to see him, though he killed my own uncle."

As he spoke these words they were approaching one of Moffat's servants, who was listening to the farmer interestedly, with a slight smile on his face Moffat looked at the old man too and hesitated a moment. He had not known that he had a personal grievance against the outlaw. Then his faith in him reasserted itself.

"This, then," said he, "is Africaner."

The farmer started as though he had been struck, and then gazed at Africaner in speechless astonishment. At last he found words.

"Are you Africaner?" he asked.

The Hottentot rose to his feet and, doffing his hat with a kindly smile, replied, "I am."

What did it mean? Africaner, the terror of South Africa, journeying as the servant of a poor white man! Africaner, the author of countless crimes, greeting his natural foe with a friendly smile! Africaner, the outlaw with a price of a thousand dollars on his head, travelling calmly through his enemies' country.

"O God," exclaimed the astonished Boer, "what a miracle of Thy power! What cannot Thy grace accomplish?"

* * * * *

At length Cape Town was reached. To Moffat, after so many months of solitude, the houses and bustling streets seemed strange; but to the outlaw, who had never known anything but the open veldt and wild desert, it was positively bewildering. When they came to the Government House the chief waited outside while Moffat went in to see the Governor. Lord Charles Somerset had heard of the missionary's daring adventure, and received him kindly; but when he went on to ask for a free

pardon for the outlaw, on the ground of his changed heart, the Governor smiled incredulously.

"I wish I could believe you, sir," he said.

"But it is true, my lord; and what is more, Africaner stands waiting at your door."

The Governor looked at him in amazement, but, seeing that he spoke the truth, he bade him fetch the outlaw. If the chief felt any fear in the presence of the man in whose hands his life lay, he showed no trace of it as he stood before him with quiet dignity.

A few words sufficed to show the Governor that what the missionary had told him was true, and before the friends had left the room Africaner had been granted a free pardon and a safe conduct back to his land. When they were alone again, he turned to Moffat. "Ah, my friend," he said, "what a glorious thing it is to be an honest man, and free!"

* * * * *

A year had passed and much had happened. Quite unexpectedly Moffat had found himself sent to Bechuanaland, three hundred miles east from his old station. But the friends were together again, for Africaner had come over from his kraal, bringing the goods which Moffat had left behind. To-day, however, was the last day, and Moffat's heart was sad as he wondered when he should again see the man he had learned to love so well. His one

comfort was that the chief would carry on in his kraal the work which he had begun. With a sigh he turned to the hut where his friend was. As he stooped to enter it, he saw inside two men in earnest conversation. For a moment he drew back. One of the men was Africaner, the other—Berend, the Griqua chief! Like Africaner, he had become a Christian, and now the two implacable enemies forgot their unfinished feud in their new-found friendship.

But though he marvelled, Moffat knew that the one power that had tamed the lion of the desert and his relentless enemy was the mighty, all-conquering power of Love.

With a full heart he stooped and passed in to his friend.

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